

Lessons for Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 1, 2016

Psalm 67 (*antiphon: v. 3*) ~ *A prayer for God's blessings on his people through which the nations will know him.*

Acts 16:9-15 - *Through a man in a vision, God called Paul to carry the Gospel to Philippi in Macedonia.*

Revelation 21:9-14, 21-27 - *In the holy city Jerusalem, the people of God always enjoy His presence.*

John 16:23-33 - *Through Jesus, the believer always has access to the Father.*

or John 5:1-9 - *Jesus healed a paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda simply by His command.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: God Shows His Love through His People.

Paul received a special vision from God calling him to take the message of God's love in Christ to the people of Macedonia. Jesus explained to the disciples that through Him they could go directly to the Father for all their needs, because God provides all good things for His people, just as when He brought healing to the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda. In the Holy City, the heavenly Jerusalem, we won't need any reminders of God's love, because we will be with him eternally.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord God, thank you for all the good things You give me every day, not just because I need them, but because they point me toward You and Your love. Thank You for mothers, who show Your love in their sacrifice and selfless love for their children. Thank You for Your Holy Spirit who keeps me trusting in Your gracious forgiveness through Jesus' death and resurrection so that I may share the peace You have given me in this world and be confident of Your promise of the world to come. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: God has blessed us with material things so that we may use them to bring greater blessings to our neighbors by using these gifts to point people to God's surpassing love in Christ.

OFFERING PRAYER: Lord, You have set Your people free
From sin and death and misery.
Grant us the will to spread Your love
By what we do with all we have. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: How often are we called, through or without a vision, to 'come over and help' someone with the love and gospel of Christ, but we find other things to do? How many Lydia's never have their hearts opened to the Lord because we do not respond when God is setting us up to be the answer to someone's prayer? Yet God in His grace has opened the gate of heaven to us through the blood of the Lamb! He gives us many opportunities to share His love by helping those who are waiting at the edge of a Bethesda in their lives.